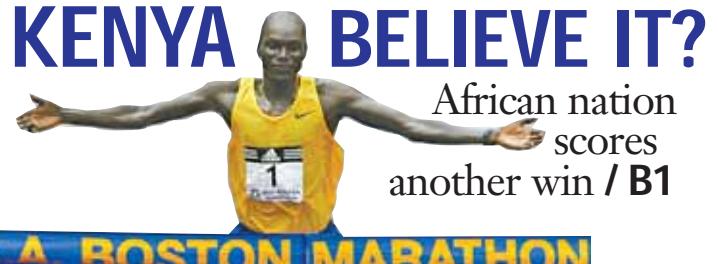




Raising the bar

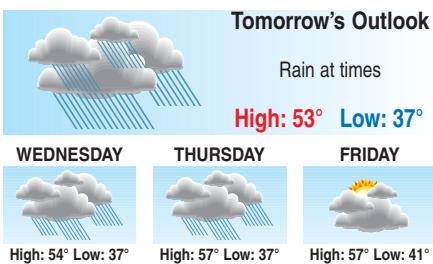
New pub exceeding expectations
BUSINESS, A5



KENYA BELIEVE IT?

African nation scores another win / B1

A A BOSTON MARATHON



Tomorrow's Outlook

Rain at times

High: 53° Low: 37°

WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

High: 54° Low: 37° High: 57° Low: 37° High: 57° Low: 41°

Albany Democrat-Herald

50 cents Albany, Oregon

Monday, April 16, 2007

www.democratherald.com

Gunman kills dozens at Va. Tech

It is the deadliest campus shooting in U.S. history

BLACKSBURG, Va. (AP) — A gunman opened fire in a dorm and classroom at Virginia Tech today, killing at least 30 people in the deadliest shooting rampage in U.S. history, government officials told The Associated Press. The gunman was killed, bringing to death toll to 31, but it was unclear if he was shot by police or took his own life.

"Today the university was struck with a tragedy that we consider of monumental proportions," said Virginia Tech president Charles Steger. "The university is shocked and indeed horrified."

The name of the gunman was not immediately released, and investigators

offered no motive for the attack. It was not immediately known if the gunman was a student. FBI spokesman Richard Kolko in Washington said there was no immediate evidence to suggest it was a terrorist attack, "but all avenues will be explored."

The shootings spread panic and confusion on campus, with witnesses reporting students jumping out the windows of a classroom building to escape the gunfire. The bloodbath took place at opposite sides of the 2,600-acre campus, beginning at about 7:15 a.m. at West Ambler Johnston, a coed dormitory that houses 895 people, and continuing about two hours later at Norris Hall, an engineering building about 2,000 feet away, authorities said.

Police said they were still investigating the shooting at the dorm when they got word of gunfire at the classroom

building. After the first shots were fired, students were warned to stay indoors and away from the windows. But some students said they thought the precautions had been lifted by the time the second burst of gunfire was heard.

Some of the dead were students. One student was killed in the dorm, and the others were killed in the classroom, Virginia Tech Police Chief W.R. Flinchum.

Up until Monday, the deadliest campus shooting in U.S. history was a rampage that took place in 1966 at the University of Texas at Austin, where Charles Whitman climbed the clock tower and opened fire with a rifle from the 28th-floor observation deck. He killed 16 people before he was shot to death by police.

See SHOOTING on A11

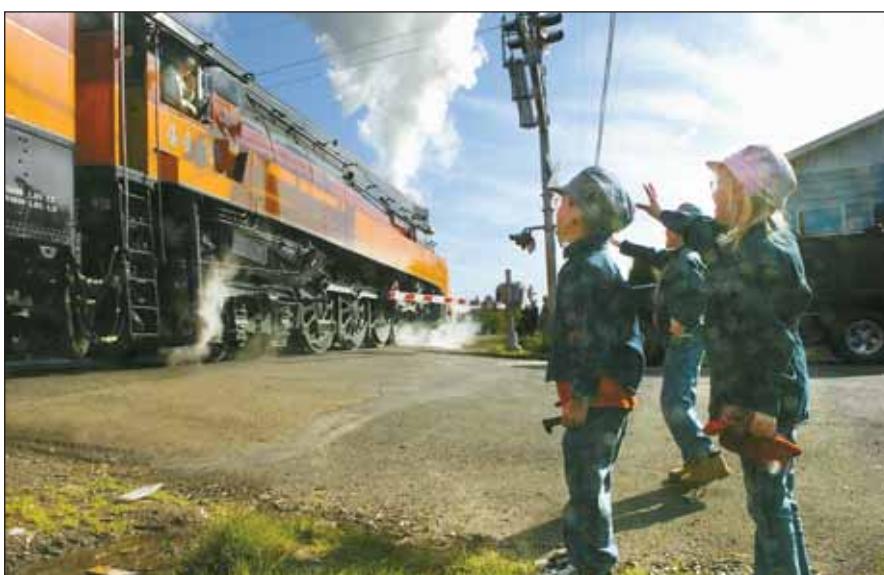


An injured man is carried out of Norris Hall today at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va.



Engine 4449 chugs out of Albany

Twins Casey and Melissa Smith, 5, and their 8-year-old brother Kyle wave to Chief Engineer Doyle McCormack on Sunday morning as the Southern Pacific 4449 passes by the Marion Street crossing in Albany. The children were among approximately 100 spectators who watched the world-famous steam locomotive begin chugging its way back to Portland. The engine was in Albany so a crew could use the Portland & Western Railroad's repair shop to replace a bearing on one of the engine's 80-inch steel wheels.



MARK YLEN/DEMOCRAT-HERALD

Committee considers OSP funds

DEMOCRAT-HERALD

More funding for the Oregon State Police was up for discussion at the Legislature in Salem today.

The House Committee on Revenue this afternoon planned to take up a number of bills on how to bolster the budget of the state police in order to put more troopers on the road for patrols.

One of the bills up for a hearing was HB 3535 sponsored by Rep. Andy Olson, R-Albany, and most other Republicans and 14 Democrats in the House and Senate.

The bill would allocate 1 percent of the general fund — or \$127 million next biennium — to the state police patrol division. The goal is to enable troopers to patrol major highways including Interstate 5 around the clock.

Among other bills up for the hearing was one that would increase the beer and wine tax in order to provide more money for the state police.

Also up for discussion was the HJR 28, a proposed constitutional amendment that would allocate 10 percent of lottery proceeds for the state police.

In addition to the hearings, the House tax committee also scheduled a work session on HB 2745, which would allocate \$65 million to the state police next biennium from the Economic Development Fund of the state Department of Administrative Services.

Olson said in his newsletter that in 1979, the OSP had 541 state troopers. Since then, the population has increased more than 30 percent and the number of vehicles has risen about 65 percent, but the number of troopers in the patrol division has been cut to 287.

Stories of heroic action flow at vets' reunion in Albany

BY JENNIFER MOODY
ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

Thirty-nine years later, the grenade still tears at him.

There isn't much to tell, Melvin "Mike" Hewitt insists. He was 34, a first sergeant in Charlie Company, 1st of 8th Infantry. They were in Vietnam, in a firefight, trying to hold a hill.

A and C companies were both there but the enemy overran them. Hand to hand combat. Noise. Confusion.

He was in a shell hole with perhaps half a dozen men when the grenade came in. He remembers covering it with his legs. There wasn't time for more.

"I got wounded," he says tersely, jerking his head at the man sitting next to him. "He helped take care of me."

His jaw clenches, his voice breaks. He's done talking about it.

Eric Czernowski of North Albany understands. He was the medic for the company that day,



From left, Eric Czernowski of North Albany, Robert Maxwell of Bend and Mike Hewitt of Umatilla pose for a photo in Albany Saturday outside of the Best Western Inn.

and Hewitt, who covered the grenade with his body to save his fellow soldiers, was his first sergeant. Hewitt now lives in Umatilla.

Robert Maxwell, of Bend, The three men were among

about 50 veterans who gathered in Albany at the VFW hall this weekend for the twice-yearly reunion of the Northwest chapter of the Army 4th Infantry Division.

Now but a veteran understands a fellow veteran, the men gathered in the hospitality room of the Best Western Inn agree. That makes reunions the best place — sometimes the only place — to share the stories of their service.

Maxwell received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions, the highest military decoration awarded by the United States. He is currently the only Medal of Honor recipient living in Oregon.

Maxwell was with the 3rd Infantry Division that day in 1944. It was a pitch-black night, he remembers. They were under heavy fire. "Incoming everything from 20 mm anti-aircraft to rifle machine guns and grenades."

He remembers the grenade falling in the midst of his squad. He vaguely remembers trying to

find it in the dark and throw it back, then realizing there wasn't time.

The Army knows what happened next: Maxwell grabbed a blanket and threw himself on the grenade.

All Maxwell remembers is coming to and discovering he was alone, left for dead. He wandered into a nearby house where his platoon leader was picking up the last few pieces of equipment.

"We did a three-legged race up the road, the Germans firing at us the whole time," Maxwell recalls. "I'd have been captured or killed if it wasn't for him."

The Medal of Honor is supposed to be presented by the president. But in May 1945, Roosevelt had died and Truman was just taking over, so Gen. G.W. Danielson, the commandant of the Colorado Army Divisions, made the presentation.

See VETERANS on A11

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142nd year/No. 91

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